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Summary record of the 28th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 6 March 2014, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Taalas ..... (Finland)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 116: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (*continued*) (A/68/101/Add.1)

1. **The Chair** drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General (A/68/101/Add.1) informing the General Assembly of the passing away of Mr. Zhang Wanhai (China), a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and requesting the General Assembly to appoint a person to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term of office, which would have expired on 31 December 2016.

2. The Government of China had nominated Mr. Ye Xuenong, whose candidature had been endorsed by the Group of Asia-Pacific States, to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term of office of Mr. Zhang.

3. *The Committee decided, by acclamation, to recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of Mr. Ye Xuenong (China) to membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a term of office beginning on the date of his appointment and expiring on 31 December 2016.*

Agenda item 146: Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (*continued*)

Construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch (A/68/724 and A/68/777)

4. **Mr. Nye** (Facilities Management Service), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch (A/68/724), said that key milestones in the project continued to be met, including approval of the design and construction of the new facilities and the budget, recruitment of a project manager, conclusion of an agreement with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the grant of land at no cost to the United Nations, and the signing of a contract with the architectural and engineering design consultancy firm. Day-to-day oversight and integrated project management were provided by the project manager, thus assisting the Registrar of the Mechanism to advance the project while ensuring ethical compliance and accountability.

5. The Office of Central Support Services was providing guidance on project implementation to the Mechanism, which had formulated the design requirements of the new facility in-house. Other Secretariat offices were also providing advice and legal support to ensure that the Organization's overall strategic objectives were incorporated into the design.

6. Noting that the General Assembly had already appropriated the entire budget of $8,787,700, he said that a contract had now been awarded for the design and construction of the new facilities. Selection of a United Kingdom-based firm, with a subcontractor in Uganda, corresponded to the key requirement for a business presence in Africa, in line with the General Assembly's encouragement to incorporate local knowledge and capacity. The Registrar was confident that the contractor would effectively transform the conceptual design into reality.

7. The Registrar, mindful of the challenges and risks inherent in construction projects, had formally requested the Office of Internal Oversight Services to arrange for continuous audit of the project, and had instructed the project team to meet regularly with the resident auditor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha. The first audit of the project was scheduled for the second quarter of 2014.

8. Further milestones would be met in 2014: the contractor would develop a detailed design for the facility and produce tender documents for construction. Sourcing of the construction firm would begin in the first half of 2014.

9. The construction project was of crucial importance, and would equip the Mechanism with the requisite infrastructure to discharge its responsibilities, which included ensuring that the legacy and achievements of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in the field of international criminal justice were carried forward. The Registrar of the Mechanism was firmly committed to completion of the construction of the new premises of the Arusha branch within the overall timeline and budget approved by the General Assembly, secured by a strong governance regime with full accountability.

10. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary

Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/68/777), said that the Advisory Committee welcomed the continued cooperation between the Mechanism and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, and trusted that it would be maintained throughout all phases of the project.

11. The Advisory Committee noted that a full-time project manager, to be based in Arusha, had been hired to enhance the management and coordination of the project, and that a dedicated Procurement Officer had been added to the project team. The Advisory Committee trusted that the functional cohesion of the team, which was based in Arusha, would not be affected by the location of the Procurement Officer in Entebbe.

12. The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of drawing lessons from the experience gained with other construction projects in the planning and implementation of the project, with particular regard to the recruitment of consultants and proactive measures to address project delays. In that regard, the Advisory Committee expressed its concern at the two-month delay in the selection of an architectural design consultant; the project must be closely monitored in order to ensure its completion within the overall timeline.

13. **Ms. Rios Requena** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the project as a necessary step in implementing the mandate of the Mechanism. She welcomed the signing of the host country agreement on land for construction, as well as the recruitment of a Procurement Officer based in Entebbe. In that regard, the functional cohesion of the project team must be maintained in Arusha throughout the project.

14. It was important to draw lessons from other capital projects implemented by the Organization in the region and elsewhere, as well as from local projects by both public and private entities. The Secretary-General should continue to take advantage of local knowledge and capacities as well as the rapid growth of the construction sector in the host country. The Group would examine how those elements were being taken into account.

15. The Group was concerned at the delay in the selection of the architectural and engineering design consultant, and stressed the need for the project to be completed on time and within approved resources. She asked what the reasons for the delay were and what action had been taken to address the situation.

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (*continued*)

Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system (A/68/715 and A/68/780)

Progress in the implementation of the recommendations from the after-action review of storm Sandy (A/68/732 and A/68/780)

16. **Mr. Cutts** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system (A/68/715) and on progress in the implementation of the recommendations from the after-action review of storm Sandy (A/68/732), said that management of the myriad complex risks faced by the United Nations required a collaborative effort across departments, agencies and disciplines.

17. The organizational resilience management system had now been fully implemented at United Nations Headquarters: a resilience management policy had been approved by the senior emergency policy team; the Under-Secretary-General for Management had been appointed project owner; each duty station had been requested to appoint a resilience management project manager; and, at its April 2014 session, the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination would consider the potential for aligning emergency management practice on the organizational resilience management system. The focus would now switch to the rest of the Secretariat, and to agencies, funds and programmes.

18. The central lesson learned from storm Sandy was that the organizational resilience management system constituted an essential framework for the United Nations in responding to severe disruptive risks and disasters. The Secretariat had significantly enhanced organizational resilience at Headquarters, in terms of physical protection against flood risk, enhancements to emergency preparedness and response systems, and mitigating risk through insurance.

19. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/68/780), said that the Advisory Committee welcomed the progress in implementing the organizational resilience management system and in delivering training programmes to enhance emergency preparedness, response and recovery across the Secretariat. The governance arrangements of the initiative were satisfactory and would support effective coordination of emergency preparedness and management activities.

20. The Advisory Committee noted with appreciation that the initiative was being and would continue to be implemented within existing resources and capacity. Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of tracking the resources dedicated to that purpose, including, for example, the cost of the establishment and operations of the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre and the emergency operations centre. In that connection the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to provide a consolidated view of the actual overall costs of emergency management and preparedness activities in the context of the proposed programme budget. The Advisory Committee looked forward to receiving information on implementation of the organizational resilience management system in other entities and at other duty stations.

21. With regard to storm Sandy, the Advisory Committee noted that, by January 2014, the Organization had recovered $64.2 million in costs incurred and anticipated further recoveries of up to $12 million, and that the Organization could finance the remaining recoverable work from the insurance recoveries already received under its insurance programmes. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to provide, in the context of the first performance report for the biennium 2014-2015, comprehensive information on the remedial work undertaken, as well as a detailed accounting of the related expenditures and insurance recoveries.

22. With regard to physical infrastructure mitigation activities, the Advisory Committee noted that the total amount of $6.1 million approved had been committed or disbursed by the end of 2013 and welcomed the progress made towards completion of the work.

23. Concerning flood damage insurance coverage, the Advisory Committee noted that, in the light of the current insurance market in the New York area, the Organization had not been able to secure additional coverage above the current level of $20 million at reasonable cost. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to monitor the insurance market with a view to securing adequate flood damage coverage at reasonable cost for all United Nations installations.

24. The Advisory Committee had also made a number of observations and recommendations on the actions taken to implement the recommendations of the after-action review, in particular in the areas of information technology disaster recovery, the resilience of the iSeek and United Nations websites, and crisis communications. The Advisory Committee would comment further on arrangements for information technology disaster recovery in the context of its consideration of the report on the revised information and communication technology strategy to be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly by its sixty-ninth session, as requested by the Assembly in its resolution 67/254.

25. **Ms. Rios Requena** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group welcomed the progress in implementing the organizational resilience management system. The Group wished to know whether it offered the anticipated degree of protection; how lessons learned had been incorporated into areas requiring improvement; what the full cost of the system was; and how other stakeholders and cost-sharing with other actors had been incorporated into the initiative. She also requested details of training and governance as well as of performance indicators.

26. Regarding the recommendations emanating from the after-action review of storm Sandy, the Group took note of steps taken before the storm arrived; the impact on Headquarters, including Headquarters technology centres and communications and the emergency operations centre; and the actions taken to implement the recommendations made, in particular the status of physical infrastructure remediation and mitigation activities, risk mitigation through the insurance market and flood insurance coverage.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.